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## Satan Sanderson

By HALLIE ERMINIE RIVES,  
Author of "Harris Courageous," Etc.

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### Chapter 7

HARRY SANDERSON as he walked slowly back from a long ramble in knickerbockers and Norfolk jacket over the hills was not thinking of the sights and sounds of the pleasant evening. He had tramped miles since sundown and had returned as he set out, gloomy, unrequited, a follower of baffled quest.

Set back from the street in a wide estate of trees and shrubbery stood a great white porched house. Not a light had twinkled from it for nearly a year. The little city wondered at first, then by degrees had grown indifferent. The secret of that prolonged honeymoon Harry Sanderson and the bishop alone could have told, for the bishop knew of Hugh's criminal act. He was named executor of the will that lay in the Korean chest, and him David Stires had written the truth. His heart had gone out with pity for Jessica, and understanding. The secret he locked in his own breast, as did Harry Sanderson, each thinking the other ignorant of it.

Since that wedding day no shred of news had come to either. Harry had wished for none. To think of Jessica was a recurrent pang, and yet the very combination of the safe in his study he had formed of the letters of her name! In each memory of her he felt the fresh assault of a new and tireless foe—the love which he must deny.

Outcast and criminal as Hugh was, castaway, who had stolen a bank's money and a woman's love, he was still her husband. Hugh's wife! What could she be to him? And this fevered conflict shot through with yet another pang, for the waking smart of compunction which had risen at Jessica's bitter cry, "You helped to make him what he has become!" would not down. That cry had shown him in one clarifying instant the follies and delinquencies of his early career reduplicated as far as the facets of a crystal, and in the polarized light of conscience Hugh—loafer, gambler and thief—stood as the type and sign of an enduring accusation.

But if the recollection of that wedding day and its aftermath stalked always with him—if that kiss had seemed to cling again and again to his lips as he sat in the quiet of his study—no one guessed. He seldom played his violin now, but he had shown no outward sign. As time went on he had become no less brilliant, though more inscrutable; not less popular, save perhaps to the parish heresy hunter, for whom he had never cared a straw. But beneath the surface a great change had come to Harry Sanderson.

Tonight as he wended his way past the house in the aspens, through the clatter and commotion of the evening, there was a kind of glaze over his whole face—a shell of melancholy.

Tomorrow began Harry's summer vacation, and he had planned a month's pedestrian outing through the wide ranch valleys and the farther

ranges, and this should set him up again.

Now, however, as he walked along he was bitterly absorbed in thoughts other than his own needs. He passed more than one acquaintance with a stare of nonrecognition. One of these was the bishop, who turned an instant to look after him. The bishop had seen that look frequently of late and had wondered if it betokened physical illness or mental unrest. More than once he had remembered, with a sigh, the old whisper of Harry Sanderson's early wildness. But he knew youth and its lapses, and he liked and respected him. Only two days before, on the second anniversary of Harry's ordination, he had given him for his silken watch guard a little gold cross, engraved with his name and containing the date.

At a crossing the sight of a knot of people on the opposite side of the street awoke Harry from his abstraction. They had gathered around a peripatetic street preacher, who was holding forth in a shrill voice. Beside him on a short pole hung a dripping gasoline flare, and the hissing flame lit his bare head, his thin features, his long hair and his bony hands moving in vehement gestures. A small melodeon on four wheels stood beside him, and on its front was painted in glaring white letters:

HALLELUJAH JONES.  
Suffer me that I may speak, and after that I have spoken mock on.—Job xxi, 8.

From over the way Harry gazed at the tall, stooping figure pitilessly betrayed by the thin alpaca coat, at the ascetic face burned a brick red from



"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion," exposure to wind and sun, at the flashing eyes, the impassioned earnestness. He paused at the curb and listened curiously, for Hallelujah Jones with his evangelism mingled a spice of the zeal of the socialist. In his thinking the rich and the wicked were mingled inextricably in the great chastisement. He was preaching now from his favorite text: "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion."

Harry smiled grimly. He had always been "at ease in Zion." He wore sumptuous clothes. The ruby in his ring would bring what this plodding exhorter would call a fortune. At this moment Hede, his dapper Finn chauffeur, was polishing the motor car for him to take his cool evening spin. That very afternoon he had put into the little safe in the chapel study \$2,000 in gold which he had drawn, a part for his charities and quarterly payments and a part to take with him for the exigencies of his trip. The street evangelist over there preaching paradise and perdition to the grinning yokels often needed a square meal and was lucky if he always knew where he would sleep.

The thread of his thought broke. The bareheaded figure had ended his harangue. The eternal fires were banked for a time, while, seated on a camp stool at his melodeon, he proceeded to transport his audience to the heavenly meads of the New Jerusalem.

Two, three verses of an old fashioned hymn he sang, and after each verse more of the bystanders, some in real earnestness, some in impious hilarity, shouted in the chorus:

"Palms of victory!  
Crowns of glory!  
Palms of victory I shall wear!"

Harry walked on in a brown study, the refrain ringing through his brain. At the chapel gate lounded his chauffeur

four awaiting orders.

"Bring the car round, Hede," said Harry, "and I sha'n't need you after that tonight. I'll drive her myself. You can meet me at the garage."

The study was pitch dark, and Harry halted on the threshold with a low, ominous growl as Harry fumbled for the electric switch. As he found and pressed it and the place flooded with light, he saw a figure there, the figure of a man who had been sitting alone, beside the empty hearth, who rose shrinking back from the sudden brilliancy.

It was Hugh Stires.



### Chapter 8

HARRY SANDERSON stared at the apparition with a strange feeling, like rising from the dead. The aristocratic features were ravaged like a nicked blade. Dissipation, exposure, shame and unbridled passion had each set its separate seal upon the handsome countenance. Hugh's clothes were shabby genteel and the old slinking grace of wearing them was gone. A thin beard covered his chin, and his shifty look, as he turned it first on Harry and then nervously over his shoulder, had in it a hunted dread, a dogging terror, constant and indefinable. From bad to worse had been a swift descent for Hugh Stires.

The wave of feeling ebbed. Harry drew the window curtains, swung a shade before the light and motioned to the chair.

"Sit down," he said. Hugh looked his old friend in the face a moment; then his unsteady glance fell to the white carnation in his lapel as he said, "I suppose you wonder why I have come here."

Harry did not answer the implied question. His scrutiny was deliberate, critical and inquiring. "What have you been doing the last year?" he asked.

"A little of everything," replied Hugh. "I ran a bucket-shop with Morrell in Sacramento for awhile. Then I went over in the mining country. I took up a claim at Smoky Mountain. That's worth something or may be sometime."

"Why did you leave it?" Harry touched his parched lips with his tongue. Again that nervous, sideling look, that fearful glance over his shoulder.

"I had no money to work it. I had to live. Besides, I'm tired of the whole thing."

The backward glance, the look of dread, were tangible tokens Harry translated them.

"You are not telling the truth," he said shortly. "What have you done?"

Hugh flushed, but he made sullen answer: "Nothing. What should I have done?"

"That is what I am now inquiring of myself," said Harry. "Your face is a book for any one to read. I see things

written on it, Hugh—things that tell a story of wrongdoing. You are afraid."

Hugh shivered under the regard. Did his face really tell so much?

"I don't care to be seen in town," he said. "You wouldn't either, probably, under the circumstances." His gaze dropped to his frayed coat sleeve. In his craven fear of something that he dared not name even to himself and in his wretched need he remembered a night once before when he had sidled into town drunken and soiled to a luxurious room, a refreshing bath, clean linen and a welcome.

"You're the only one in the world I dared come to," he said miserably. "I've walked ten miles today, for I haven't a red cent in my pocket, nor even decent clothes," he ended.

"That can be partly remedied," said Harry after a pause. He took a dark coat from its hook and tossed it to him. "Put that on," he said. "You needn't return it."

Hugh caught the garment. In another moment he had exchanged it for the one he wore and was emptying the old coat's pockets.

"Don't sneak!" said Harry with sudden contempt. "Don't you suppose I know a deck of cards when I see it?"

The thin scar on Hugh's brow reddened. He thrust into his pocket the pasteboards he had made an instinctive move to conceal and buttoned the coat around him. It fitted sufficiently.

"Look here, Harry," he began, "you were a good fellow in the old days. I'm sorry I never paid you the money I borrowed. I would have but for what happened. But you won't go back on me now, will you? I want to get out of the country and begin over again somewhere. Will you loan me the money to do it?"

Hugh was eager and voluble now. The man to whom he appealed was his forlorn hope. He had come with no intention of throwing himself upon his father's mercy. He had wished to see anybody in the world but him.

"If you will, I'll never forget it, Harry!" he cried. "Never, the longest day I live! I'll use every dollar of it just as I say! I will, on my honor!"

"Honor!" he said. "Have you enough to swear by? You are what you are because you are a bad egg. You were born a gentleman, but you chose to be a rogue. Do you know the meaning of the word honor or right or justice? Have you a single purpose of mind which isn't crooked?"

"You're just like the rest, then," Hugh retorted. "Just because I did that one thing you'll give me no more chance. Yet the first thing I did with that money was to square myself. I paid every debt of honor I had. That's why I'm in the hole now. But I get no credit for it, even from you. I wish you could put yourself in my place."

Harry had been looking steadily at the sallow face with its hoof print of the satyr, not seeing it, but hearing his own voice say to Jessica: "I was my brother's keeper. I see it now." And out of the distance, it seemed, his voice answered:

"Put myself in your place! I wish I could! I wish to God I could!"

The exclamation was involuntary, automatic, the cumulative expression of every throes of conscience Harry had endured since then, the voice of that remorse that had cried insistently for reparation, dining in his ears the fateful question that God asked of Cain. Suddenly a whirl of rage setled him, unmeasured, savage, malicious. He had despised Hugh, now he hated him—hated him because he was Jessica's husband and, more than all, because he was the symbol of his own self abasement. A dardevil side of the old Satan Sanderson that he had chained and barred rose up and took him by the throat. He struck the oak wainscoting with his fist, feeling a red mist grow before his eyes.

"So you paid every debt of honor"

you had, eh? You acknowledge gamester's honor, but not the notion of right action between man and man! Very well. Give me the cards. You want money—do you?"

He swiftly turned the clicking bination of the safe, wrenched the door and took out two heavy bags. He snapped the ends of the neck of one of these, and a long stream of double eagles was flung on the table. He dipped hand in the yellow pile. A mad as the hoofs of runaway was careening through his brain, an odd lightness of mind, a tingling of every nerve and muscle.

"Here is two thousand dollars—if you win it—for you shall play you gambler, who pays his debt 'honor' and no other! You shall fair and straight, if you want again!"

Hugh gazed at Harry in a way. This was not the Harry Sanderson he had known, the sparkling eyes and the veiled look. This reminded him of reckless spirit of his college days, he had patterned after and had in awe of.

"How can I play," he said, "you know very well I have no markee!"

Harry stuffed the gold back in his bag. He snatched the card, Hugh's hand and a box of envelope wafers from his desk. It was a strange light in his eyes in his fingers.

"It is I who play with money," said. "My gold against yours! Each of those hundred represents a day of your life—do you understand—a red day! A day of yours against an eagle! What you win you keep for every counter I win you owe me one straight, white day, a day, lived for decency and right!"

Hugh's eyes were fastened on gold in Harry's fingers. Two dollars! If luck came his way he would go far on that—far enough to the nameless terror that pursued in every shadow. Money again wafers? Why, it was plenty if he and if he lost he had staked. What a fool Harry was!

Harry saw the shrewd, calculating look that came to his eyes. He saw his wrist.

"Not here!" he said hoarsely, flung open the chapel door and he said. He seized one of the candles, lit it with a match and it upright in its own wax on the communion table that stood beside the altar rail, with the red wafers and the bags of gold dragged two chairs forward.

"Now," he said in a strained, "put up your hand—your right and swear before this altar, gambler's honor you boast of, lose, to abide by this game!"

(To be Continued)

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